

# International



Volume 3 Issue 8

August 2007

## Contents

- 1 Message from the Mayor**  
**Message from the Council Member**
- 2 Highlights of Upcoming Events**
- 3 2007 Business Development Mission to the Russian Federation and the Netherlands**
- 4 Meet the Consul General**
- 5 Connections Across the Globe:**  
**Houston Airport System**  
**Port of Houston Authority**  
**Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau**
- 6 Global Bridge—Greater Houston Cooperative Retailers Association**  
**Special Invitation**
- 7-8 Event Calendar (August)**  
**Opportunities and Resources**

## Message from the Mayor

In late July, a 40-member delegation participated in the City of Houston Business Development Mission to the Russian Federation and the Netherlands. The delegation did a tremendous job representing our city, establishing connections in respective areas and forming the types of partnerships from which our city benefits.



*Bill White*

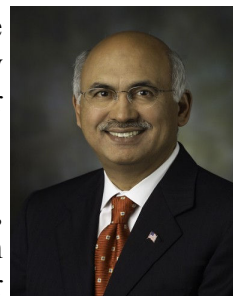
During our visits to the cities of Moscow, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, it became apparent that cities, which seek world-class recognition, are faced with many similar challenges. I am proud to announce that the Mission generated two signed documents; the first -- between the City of Houston and the City of Moscow, and the second -- between the Port of Houston and the Port of Rotterdam. Both agreements pledge cooperation in a variety of areas wherein our pooling our experience could yield the positive results for all parties involved.

**Bill White, Mayor**

---

## Message from the Chairman, International Liaison and Protocol Committee

As Houston's population continues to grow, we see its diversity expand in new and exciting ways. New communities generate new opportunities for international business endeavors and education.



*M.J. Khan*

The International Liaison and Protocol Committee, has the honor and privilege of meeting with representatives from numerous Houston Sister Cities. In July, we met with delegates from Chiba, Japan, in honor of the 35th anniversary of the signing of the Sister City program between our two cities. Recently, we also attended a ceremony for the unveiling of the Sister Cities Map Installation at George Bush Intercontinental Airport. The map highlights the great relationships we have established with international communities throughout the world.

**M. J. Khan, Council Member**

# Highlights of Upcoming Events

## Small Business Development Lectures

August 1—The Port of Houston will sponsor meetings/lectures aiding small businesses. The Houston Minority Business Council and the Women's Business Enterprise Alliance will address the benefits extended to businesses registered with them. For more information, visit [www.portofhouston.com](http://www.portofhouston.com)

## Karachi Chamber of Commerce

August 3—A delegation led by the Karachi Chamber of Commerce will meet with the Mayor's International Affairs and Development Council for South Asia to discuss the promotion of trade and economic opportunities between the two cities. For more information, contact (713) 247-3397.

## Welcome Ned Holmes

August 15—The Greater Houston Partnership will host a reception at Hotel Icon, welcoming Ned Holmes, who has recently been appointed by Governor Perry to the Texas Transportation Commission and who also serves on the City of Houston Planning Commission. For more information, contact (713) 844-3659.

## Unity Day 2007

August 18—Please join Unity Day Houston for a day-long celebration promoting cross-city unity, to be held in Hermann Park. The Saturday celebration is part of the larger 'Unity Week,' which will be held over the course of the week, beginning August 13. For more information, contact (281) 431-9393.

## Triunfando Annual Awards Gala

August 18—Sponsored by the Northwestern Mutual Association and the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the 24<sup>th</sup> Triunfando Annual Awards Gala will be held at the Hobby Center. The Gala will celebrate and honor some of the City's top Hispanic entrepreneurs. For more information, visit [www.houstonhispanicchamber.com](http://www.houstonhispanicchamber.com).

## Beijing Office of Informatization

August 20—As part of the agreement signed last year between the City of Houston IT Department and the Beijing Municipal of Informatization, a delegation from Beijing will visit Houston to exchange e-government practices and information management. For more information, contact (713) 247-1453.

## Inside Nigeria

August 21—The former Nigerian Minister of Finance and Brookings Institution member, Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, will discuss the current conditions in Nigeria at a World Affairs Council of Houston luncheon. The luncheon will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. For more information, contact (713) 522-7811.

## American Lebanese National Conference

August 24-26—American Lebanese leaders from around the country for this two-day conference, hosted by the American Lebanese National Mission. The conference will focus on increasing the dialogue between business, community and political leaders of Lebanese heritage. For more information, contact [drkantara@houston.rr.com](mailto:drkantara@houston.rr.com).

## Indo American Gala

August 25—The Indo American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston will host its annual gala and awards banquet, honoring outstanding entrepreneurs and leaders of community service in the greater Houston Indo-American community. The event will be held at the Westin Galleria Hotel. For more information, contact [iaccgh01@aol.com](mailto:iaccgh01@aol.com)

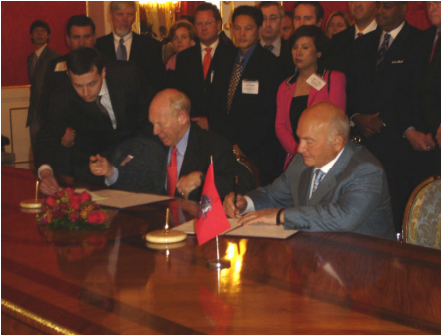


# Special Report

## 2007 Business Development Mission

### to

## The Russian Federation and The Netherlands



Mayor Bill White and Mayor Yuri Luzhkov sign the Protocol for Cooperation

The first city on the delegation's itinerary was Moscow, a thriving metropolis of more than twelve million residents. As Mayor White pointed out, the world looks at the leadership of Moscow as an example for a city, which deals with common urban problems like staggering demographic changes and urban sprawl. On their personalized introduction to Moscow, Houston delegates saw first-hand Moscow's urban planning, which aims at transforming the city of the Tsars and the Soviets into a 21st century capital of the Russian Federation. Mayor White and Mayor Luzhkov recognized the similarities shared by Houston and Moscow, as both cities prepare themselves to address future challenges.

Next, the delegation visited three major cities in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague. Through well-designed itinerary programs, the delegates were able to recognize the manner in which each city has emerged as an international leader in its own right. The Honorable Job Cohen, Mayor of Amsterdam, told the delegation that his city, a center for European and world commerce for centuries, is now a more diverse city, comprised of residents who hail from over 170 different nationalities. The delegates visited Rotterdam, home to one of the world's largest ports, which had been demolished in WWII, and has since been rebuilt with a glistening and modern infrastructure to keep the city ahead of the curve. The delegates were awed by The Hague, the Netherlands' seat of government and home to the Peace Palace, which is the seat of the International Court of Justice.



(L-R) Port of Houston Vice Chairman Kase Lawal and Chairman James Edmonds sign Memorandum of Understanding with Port of Rotterdam CEO, Hans Smit

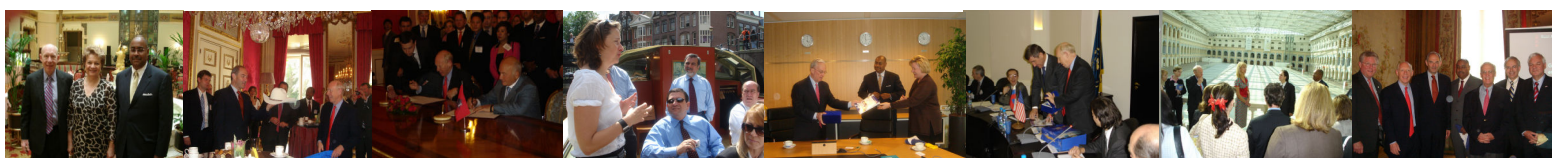


City of Houston delegation on the steps of the Peace Palace, The Hague

Delegation members had the opportunity to meet with the Mayors of all four cities as well as with the Russian Deputy Minister for Culture and Mass Media, the Russian Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade, the Deputy Director of the Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency, the Oil & Gas Producers' Union of Russia, various city officials, the U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation, and U.S. Embassy Officials in the Netherlands.

In addition to informational exchanges, the Houston delegation also sought to lay the groundwork for future cooperation, as materialized in the two agreements signed during the visit: the Protocol for Cooperation, signed by Mayor White and Mayor Luzhkov in Moscow, and the

Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Port of Houston and the Port of Rotterdam. These documents reflect the significant impact that the collaboration with other cities and regional partners, the sharing of best practices and the learning from each other's experience, jointly has on furthering Houston's standing in the international arena.



# Turkey

*This month we take you across the Strait of Bosphorus to the Anatolian Peninsula—where East meets West—and to the country which sits aside both worlds, to speak with the Honorable Atila Uzer, the Consul General of Turkey in Houston.*



Ambassador  
Utila Uzer

Ambassador Atila Uzer, Turkey's Consul General, had arrived in Houston two days after Hurricane Katrina and then experienced Hurricane Rita, his "welcoming ceremonies."

Despite such rocky 'welcomes,' he has enjoyed being in Houston and feels that Turkey and Houston have many common threads. "Houston and Turkey

both have harmony in their vast diversities. Even though Turkey has a predominantly Muslim population, one can observe different religious and ethnic groups who have lived in peace and harmony together for several centuries. Houston is also host to so many different national, religious and ethnic groups from around the world, which gives the city a richness."

Ambassador Uzer is proud of the many cultural and educational exchanges between Turkey and Houston. Noting that Turkey ranks second in the number of foreign students studying in the United States, after China, Uzer also mentioned that more than 100 Turkish PhD candidates are currently studying in Houston.

"Sister city relations were established between Istanbul and Houston in 1986, and currently, many Turkish doctors work here. Our Ministry of Health has recently conducted exchange programs with your Medical Center here. The new hospital in Ankara will be modeled in many respects after elements at Baylor College of Medicine and M.D. Anderson," said Uzer.

A graduate of Ankara University, with a major in diplomacy and international relations, Uzer entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1973. Fluent in French, Spanish and English, Uzer has served in posts all over the world, including Mexico, Switzerland, Austria and Romania.

He became Ambassador in August 1999, and was posted to Algeria where he served for four years as Turkey's chief diplomat. "Algeria was a very interesting country, with many challenges, because of the terrorism. There are many petroleum-related interests there," Uzer added.

Houston and Turkey also share many economic and cultural partnerships. Uzer remarked that two energy-related delegations from Turkey had recently visited Houston to establish relationships. "Turkey has recently achieved significant success in the energy field. Several pipelines passing through its territory, connecting the supplier countries to the global markets, have been finalized lately. We believe that all of these developments will be very beneficial for both Turkey and Houston."

One of Turkey's most prominent artists, Yalcin Gokcebag, recently had his work exhibited at the Williams Tower in the Post Oak area. One of many cultural exchanges, this exhibit was also coordinated by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A classical music buff, Uzer also enjoys reading, tennis and photography. He and his wife, Alicia, have two sons. One of his sons is studying for his PhD degree in Savannah, Georgia, and the other works in Istanbul.

—By Mary Jane Wakefield

### Did You Know?

"Because of its strategic location, where two continents meet, Turkey's culture has a unique blend of Eastern and Western traditions, often described as a bridge between two civilizations."

Source: [www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org)



# Connections Across the Globe:

*This month we track developments taking place within the Houston Airport System, the Port of Houston Authority and the Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau*

## Houston Airport System (HAS)

The first flight of the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner is expected in late August or September of this year. The Dreamliner, which is touted as the next generation in mid-sized aircrafts, can fly long international routes all the while using 20 percent less fuel and traveling at a speed similar to today's fastest jetliners.

This groundbreaking series of airplanes could have a considerable impact on passenger traffic at George Bush

Intercontinental Airport (IAH), and Houston-based Continental Airlines is a believer. The company has ordered eight of the 787-8 aircraft and 17 of the next generation 787-9 Dreamliners for use on its international routes.

Larry Kellner, Chairman and CEO of Continental Airlines, explains that "the increased size and range of the 787-9 will allow us to serve more cities with the lowest operating seat cost of any aircraft in our fleet."

According to HAS's director of marketing, Genaro Pena, "Airlines are going to be able to service a lot more passengers and offer more destinations at a reduced cost." Furthermore, "This aircraft will allow us to increase our capacity and help our air service development immensely, which means offering the passengers who use our Houston airports more options," says Pena.

**Juan M. Alanis, HAS**

## Port of Houston Authority (PHA)

Through strong support of the Houston congressional delegation, the Port of Houston Authority, as the local government sponsor of the Houston-Galveston Navigational Ship Channel, received notice from Washington on June 29th that the Senate Finance Committee appropriated a total of \$33.5 million in funding for the Houston Ship Channel.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Galveston District

will receive \$16.3 million for general construction and \$17.2 million for operations and maintenance.

Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, an appropriator on the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee, was key to getting the funding and the increase above the President's budget.

Widening project widened the channel from 400 feet to 530 feet and deepened the channel from 40 feet to 45 feet from the sea buoy to the Beltway 8 bridge. Dredge material from the project will be used to build 4,250 acres of tidal marsh and wetlands in Galveston Bay.

**Edwin Henry, POHA**

Completed in 2005, the Houston Ship Channel Deepening and

## Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau (GHCVB)

Although Houston has generally been considered a corporate destination for business travelers, increasingly, it has also been known as a leisure destination in many Latin American countries, particularly Mexico.

GHCVB's efforts have mainly focused on: reinforcing Houston's image as a preferred shopping destination; promoting the city's renowned health facilities at the Texas Medical Center; highlight-

ing the city's icon, NASA's Johnson Space Center; and drawing attention to the city's many cultural offerings.

Through its Mexico Agency, GHCVB has been coordinating sales missions to Mexico City, Monterey and Guadalajara, which represent 72% of the 1.8 million Mexican travelers to Houston every year. GHCVB also participates in the Texas Tourism sales missions, representing

Houston at trade shows and attending the Mundo Continental and VisitUSA seminars in provincial cities throughout Mexico.

Through these focalized efforts, GHCVB obtains results and the prospects for future tourism from Mexico look really bright.

**Daniel Palomo, GHCVB**

## **The Global Bridge: Greater Houston Retailers Cooperative Association**

*Each month, the International Newsletter features "the Global Bridge" section, which introduces local business organizations dedicated to promoting Houston's international image.*



Karim Dhukani

Established in 1999 for the benefit of its members who own independent convenience stores in the Greater Houston area, the Greater Houston Retailers Cooperative Association (GHRA) has achieved great success, according to its president, Mr. Karim Dhukani. Its current membership, which stands at over 1,300, spreads over 40 counties, making it the largest association of its kind in the U.S.

Mr. Dhukani noted that this organization has provided its members with opportunities for professional growth through educational and service-oriented training programs. "Partnerships have been developed with institu-

tions such as the Houston Police Foundation, American Red Cross, Interfaith Ministries and the Aga Khan Foundation."

Collectively, the GHRA membership supports approximately 6,000 local jobs. GHRA has also made many contributions to local, state and national charitable organizations. According to Dhukani, "In the time of crisis, when Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit, GHRA worked hand-in-hand with the City of Houston by donating \$100,000 with the help of our members and partners. We have also worked closely with Crime Stoppers to aid the City's police officers."

—By Mary Jane Wakefield

## **Special Invitation: 2007 Summer Davos**

The City of Houston and the Greater Houston Partnership are pleased to inform you about a new and unique opportunity to showcase your company and Houston at the 'Summer Davos' forum, which will be held in Dalian, China, on September 6-8, 2007. The Forum will be hosted by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum, the organizer of the renowned winter forums in Davos, Switzerland.

This world-class business Forum, initiated in close partnership with the government of the People's Republic of China, will include the 'Community of New Champions' exhibition, which will highlight cities and regions around the world. The

event is expected to bring over 300 CEOs from global growth companies along with the Forum's existing members, to network, exchange ideas and cooperate.

Houston has been selected by the Forum organizers as an excellent example of a city, which fosters a growing and dynamic business environment. Home to the headquarters of numerous global growth companies, Houston has received the distinction of being the *only* U.S. city invited to participate in the 'Summer Davos' forum.

If you have any questions or wish to register, please contact (713) 247-1453 or (713) 844-3607.

[www.houstontx.gov/moiad](http://www.houstontx.gov/moiad)

**International Newsletter  
is published monthly by the**

**Mayor's Office of  
International Affairs  
&  
Development  
City of Houston**

**Bill White  
Mayor**

**Helen T. Chang  
Director**

**Matthew Shailer  
Editor**

**Mary Jane Wakefield  
&  
Tiffany Ching  
Assistant Editors**

**Please send articles/  
comments to  
[helen.chang@cityofhouston.net](mailto:helen.chang@cityofhouston.net)  
Fax: (713) 437-6358**

**901 Bagby  
City Hall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Houston, Texas 77002  
(713) 247-3397**

**Next Submission Deadline:  
August 20, 2007**

## August 2007

Date	Time	Event	Venue	Contact
8/1	4:30 PM	Port of Houston Authority: Office of Small Business Development Presents Houston Minority Business Council and Women's Business Enterprise Alliance	Port of Houston Executive Building	(713) 670-2588
8/2	7:30 AM	Houston Networking News: HNN Lead & Referrals Breakfast	Amazon Grill Restaurant	(281) 778-6661
8/3	11:30 AM	Mayor's International Affairs & Development Council for South Asia: Delegation from Karachi, Pakistan	Stumpf Boardroom, City Hall	(713) 247-3397
8/5	11:00 AM	The 17th Annual Houston International Jazz Festival: 2007 Mayor's Jazz Scholarship Brunch	Wortham Theatre	jeibrunch@hotmail.com
8/6	—	City of Houston: Shanxi Province, China Delegation	—	(713) 247-1453
8/8	11:30 AM	Asian Chamber of Commerce: August Monthly Luncheon—The Art of Networking & the Art of Communication	Westin Galleria Hotel	(713) 782-7222
	11:30 AM	Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce: Israel and Palestine—Is it too Late for Peace?	Westin Oaks Hotel	(713) 880-8168
8/10	11:30 AM	Asian American Bar Association: "Can We Talk?" Corporate Counsel/Ethics Lunchtime	Gardere Wynne Sewell, LLP	lkramer@munsch.com
8/11	—	Houston Citizen's Chamber of Commerce: Trade Mission to China (through August 20)	—	(713) 522-9745
8/15	5:30 PM	Greater Houston Partnership: Welcome Reception for Commissioner Ned Holmes, Texas Transportation Commission	Hotel Icon	(713) 844-3659
8/17	7:00 PM	Consulate General of Indonesia: 62nd Independence Day Anniversary of the Republic of Indonesia	Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia	(713) 785-1691
8/18	10:00 AM	Unity Day Houston 2007	Miller Outdoor Theatre — Hermann Park	(281) 431-9393
	6:00 PM	Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce: 24th Triunfando Annual Awards Gala	Hobby Center	www.houstonhispanicchamber.com
8/20	—	City of Houston: Beijing Office of Informatization Delegation	—	(713) 247-1453
	—	U.S. Vietnam Chamber of Commerce: Delegation from Vietnam (through August 21)	—	(713) 862-5050
8/21	12:00 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: Inside Nigeria	Hyatt Regency Hotel	(713) 522-7811
	8:00 AM	City of Houston Department of Health and Human Services: PanFlu Houston 2007	Hilton Americas Hotel	(713) 470-1156
8/22	6:30 PM	Consulate General of France: Farewell Reception for the Consul General of France in Houston and the Cultural Attache	The Menil Collection	(713) 985-3263
8/23	6:30 PM	World Affairs Council of Houston: Global Political Islam—Prospects for Political Change in the Muslim World	Junior League	(713) 522-7811

8/24	—	American Lebanese National Mission: Lebanese Leadership Conference	TBD	drkantara@houston.rr.com
	11:30 AM	Greater Houston Partnership: Professional Services Council—Quarterly Networking Luncheon	Hotel ZaZa	(713) 844-3686
8/25	10:30 AM	Chinese Community Center: Gym Grand Opening	Chinese Community Center	(713) 271-6100 ext. 102
	12:00 PM	Southern U.S. Fujian Chamber of Commerce—Inaugural Celebration	Ocean Palace Restaurant	(832) 766-5798
	6:30 PM	Indo American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston—8th Annual Gala & Awards Banquet	Westin Galleria Hotel	iaccgh01@aol.com
8/27	11:30 AM	World Affairs Council of Houston: Law & Rwanda—Can a New Legal System be the Foundation for Prosperity and Stability in Africa	Petroleum Club of Houston	www.houstonworldaffairs.org
8/29	6:30 PM	Asia Society: An Enchanted Traveler's Impressions of India's "Little Tibet"	River Oaks Compass Bank	713-439-0051
Late Aug.	—	City of Houston: Delegation from Panjing, China	—	713-247-1453

## Opportunities & Resources

### Internship

- KHOU Channel 11 (deadline August 10)  
Contact: jobs@khoul.com

### Youth Program

- U.S. Ship for World Youth Alumni Association, Ship for the World Youth Program  
Contact: www.swyusa.com

